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#### IV.—THE CHANGE OF þ TO *t* IN THE ORRMULUM.

In the preface to his edition of the Ormmulum, Dr. R. M. White, under the head of peculiarities which “seem chiefly to relate to pronunciation and orthography,” makes the following statement :

“We also find, with some exceptions, the change of the initial þ into *t* after words ending in *d*, *dd*, *t*, and *tt*. Exceptions occur in compounded words, or when a word with the initial þ is separated by the metrical point from that which precedes it, or lastly, in some instances, when it takes the vowel *u* after the þ, as in þu and þurrh.”

A foot-note gives some illustrations of the change and the exceptions, and refers us to another note where we are told that the same change of þ to *t* occurs also after *ss* in the phrases þess *te bett*, þess *te bettre*, þess *te mare*. This statement of the change, with the accompanying notes, contains all that White says on the subject, and as Mr. Holt, the editor of the last edition (Oxford, 1878) has added nothing to this statement of the author's usage, I infer that the change in question has not been investigated by any one else, although it forms a prominent peculiarity of Orrmin's language, and one that more than any other, except his systematic doubling of consonants, gives to the Ormmulum its specific character and appearance. It has seemed to me, therefore, worthy of a more careful study than the editors of the work appear to have given it.

Some years ago, when I first read the poem, I was led to doubt the exactness of White's statement of Orrmin's treatment of initial þ, chiefly because I found that only a part of the words beginning with that letter appeared in the Glossary under *t* also ; a circumstance from which I drew the inference that they either were not subject to change like the others, or, which seemed unlikely, did not occur after *t* or *d*. On a later reading I found my doubts confirmed, and began to take note of the exceptions and to try to formulate Orrmin's usage and discover the rule, if any, which he had followed. The result of my examination was the discovery of one or two peculiarities of usage, which, I have

reason to believe, have been overlooked hitherto, and which seem to me to be of enough interest and value to students of English to be worthy of publication.

On the basis of the change under consideration, the words of the Orrmulum that begin with *p* may be classified into three lists, viz :

(a) Words that do not occur after *t* or *d*.

(b) Words that occur after *t* or *d*, but do not change *p* to *t* when thus placed.<sup>1</sup>

(c) Words that occur after *t* or *d*, and, in that position, change *p* to *t*.

The first list need not be given here. It comprises about a dozen words of rare occurrence, and it is, no doubt, a simple chance that no one of them happens to stand after *t* or *d*.

The second list comprises the following. I have added the number of times that I have found each after *t* or *d*.

1.	<i>purrh</i>	.	.	.	.	.	369
2.	<i>peowwtenn</i> <sup>2</sup>	.	.	.	.	.	20
3.	<i>pennkenn</i>	.	.	.	.	.	7
4.	<i>preo</i>	.	.	.	.	.	5
5.	<i>prifenn</i>	.	.	.	.	.	5
6.	<i>pannkenn</i>	.	.	.	.	.	4
7.	<i>pinnkenn</i>	.	.	.	.	.	3
8.	<i>prisst</i>	.	.	.	.	.	3
9.	<i>peod</i> (or <i>ped</i> )	.	.	.	.	.	2
10.	<i>ping</i>	.	.	.	.	.	2
11.	<i>putenn</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1
12.	<i>peosternesse</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1
Total <sup>3</sup>							424

<sup>1</sup>In the first and second of these lists I have counted compounds with the simple words and derivatives with their primitives, not thinking it necessary to give a long list where no change is made in initial *p*. Thus under *purrh* are also included all cases of *pwerret*, and of verbs compounded with *purrh*, under *preo* is included one case of *pridde*, &c. In the third list I have given derivative words in full but only the first part in compounds, only that part being affected by the change. The figures given with the second list may not be quite accurate; it is easy to overlook cases of change, or lack of change, in reading so large a work, though I have been fairly careful, and do not think that a second reading would change them much.

<sup>2</sup>The infinitive form is put in this list, but all forms of the verb are included in the subjoined number.

<sup>3</sup>The proportionately large number of occurrences of *purrh* in this list will surprise no one who has noticed what frequent use Orrmin makes of this preposition. The number is made much larger, of course, by including all verbs compounded with *purrh*, many of which are of very frequent use.

The third list comprises those words that are subject to the change under discussion. I have taken no note of the number of occurrences, but the total cannot fall much below two thousand.<sup>1</sup> The words are the following:

1. *pa* (those) after *t* or *d*, *ta*.
2. *pa* (then) " " " , *ta*.
3. *paer* (where) " " " , *taer*.
4. *paere* (there) " " " , *taere*.
5. *panne* (then) " " " , *tanne*.
6. *patt* (that) " " " , *tatt*.
7. *pe* (the) " " " , *te*.
8. *pe* (thee) " " " , *te*.
9. *pepen* (thence) " " " , *tepen*.
10. *pezz* (they) " " " , *tezz*.
11. *pezzre* (their) " " " , *tezzre*.
12. *pi* (thy) " " " , *ti*.
13. *pin* (thine) " " " , *tin*.
14. *piderr* (thither) " " " , *tiderr*.
15. *piss* (this) " " " , *tiss*.
16. *pohh* (though) " " " , *tohh*.
17. *pu* (thou) " " " , *tu*.
18. *puss* (thus) " " " , *tuss*.

One who has noticed the different character of the words in this list and in the preceding one can, no doubt, formulate for himself the rule of Orrmin's usage in the treatment of initial *p*. It is this:—

*Initial p of pronominal words becomes t after t or d; initial p of other words remains unchanged.*

To the second part of this rule I have found no exceptions whatever; to the first part I have found but two out of about two thousand cases, as estimated above. *patt* stands unchanged after *t* in verse 15 of the Dedication, *Aftterr patt little witt patt me*, and *pa* after *d* in verse 15,576 of the Homilies, *patt taer wass filledd pa purrh himm*. The first of these occurs in a couplet<sup>2</sup> which Orrmin, with a modest estimate of his abilities, is fond of repeating before attempting the exposition of a Scripture passage which he has quoted. The same couplet occurs repeatedly,<sup>3</sup> and always, except in the

<sup>1</sup> There are eighty cases in the first thousand verses, and these words seem to be less frequent in the Introduction and Dedication than in the Homilies.

<sup>2</sup> *Aftterr patt little witt patt me Min Drihhtin hafepp lenedd*.

<sup>3</sup> E. g. vv. 4386–87; vv. 5158–59; vv. 6390–91, &c.

first case, with the reading *witt tatt*. The second case also occurs in a verse which we find repeated<sup>1</sup> farther on with the usual change of *p* to *t*. One exception in a thousand cases is certainly not a large number, and it does not seem a very violent hypothesis, in view of the repetition of these verses in the normal form, if we assume that both the cases are simply oversights on the part of the author or the scribe.

The limitation of the rule of this change to pronominal words disposes of all the exceptions given in White's preface. These pronominal words are not used as the second part of compounds, and other words suffer no such change either in composition or elsewhere. In speaking of the metrical point, White seems to have in mind the old alliterative poetry, with the regular division of each verse by a caesura, marked in the MSS. by a point. But the metre of the Ormulum is utterly unlike that of those poems, and White has himself printed the Ormulum, not in long verses with a caesural mark, but in couplets. There can be no doubt, I think, that this is the proper form, and there is therefore no need of adding an exception to cover such cases. The rule applies only to words in the same verse; an initial *p* at the beginning of a verse, whether it be the first or second verse of the couplet, is not affected by the ending of the preceding verse. White's third exception is especially unfortunate in the citation of *pu* as an illustration, and in implying, as it seems to do, that the influence of a following *u* sometimes prevents the change of *p* to *t*. The only pronominal words in which initial *p* is followed by *u* are *pu* and *puss*, and both are regularly changed, after *d* or *t*, to *tu* and *tuss*; all others remain unaffected. The frequency of *purrh*, no doubt, suggested the exception. To White's note on *pess te bett* and the like, nothing need be added. These phrases are found twenty-five times in the Ormulum, and always in the same form, with *pess te*, never with *pess pe*.

The above list of words subject to the change of initial *p* to *t* after *t* or *d* comprises all the pronominal words of the Ormulum except *pezzm*. As the other cases of this word, *pezz* and *pezzre*, are regularly changed to *tezz* and *tezzre*, the non-occurrence of *pezzm* after *t* or *d*, and consequent lack of a form *tezzm*, is apparently intentional, and seems to deserve an explanation.

<sup>1</sup> *v.* 16,128. *patt taer wass filledd ta purrh Crist. vv.* 15,574-15,581 are, with one or two verbal changes, the same as *vv.* 16,126-16,133.

No student of Old English need be told that the language once had a regularly formed plural of the pronoun *he* in the forms *hi*, *her*, *hem*;<sup>1</sup> and that *they*, *their*, *them*, which has now replaced the regular forms, is the plural of a demonstrative pronoun, which has also furnished us the article *the* and the pronoun *that*. A peculiar circumstance of this crowding out of *hi* by *they* is the fact that all cases did not give way to the newcomer at once. The nominative *hi* was the first to yield; *her* held its own against *their* for some time after *hi* had given way, and *hem* lasted still longer; in fact, one may safely assert that it yet survives, for the *'em* of common speech is only a clipped form of it, and but for the law of usage in writing would be as legitimate a form as the similarly mutilated *it* for the regular *hit*. This difference in the power of resistance of the different cases of *he* does not seem to have been a local or dialectical matter, though the date of the change was different in different localities. In the Vision of Piers Plowman (ed. Skeat) I find

<i>hii</i> ,	7 times,	-	<i>pei</i> ,	85 times.
<i>her</i> ,	104	"	-	<i>peire</i> , 1 time.
<i>hem</i> ,	195	"	-	( <i>them</i> , 0 " )

In Pierce the Ploughman's Crede (ed. Skeat) the occurrences of these pronouns are

<i>hy</i> ,	7 times,	-	<i>pei</i> ,	94 times.
<i>her</i> ,	75	"	-	( <i>their</i> , 0 " )
<i>hem</i> ,	65	"	-	( <i>them</i> , 0 " )

These figures show that *they* had, about A. D. 1350, nearly crowded out *hi*, while *their* had scarcely got a foothold and *them* none at all. In the Ormulum, though it was evidently written at least a century earlier, this tendency has gone still further. *Hi* has altogether disappeared; *their* is well established and already getting the better of *her*; while *them*, although it has secured a foothold, is still far behind *hem*. The occurrences of these pronouns in the first three thousand verses of the poem are

( <i>hi</i> ,	0 times)	; <i>pe33</i> ,	63 times.
<i>heore</i> ,	17	"	; <i>pe33re</i> , 29
<i>hemm</i> ,	69	"	; <i>pe33m</i> , 10

We see in these figures a marked preference of the writer for *hemm*, and an examination of the places where *pe33m* is found in-

<sup>1</sup> I give only one form, though various other spellings are found.

stead proves that he uses the latter only for metrical reasons. In the whole poem *pezzm* is found but forty-seven times, and in each case it stands after a vowel which is needed to make the verse regular, but, by Orrmin's system of metre, would be elided before a following *hemm*. After consonants *hemm* is always used, and *pezzm*, being therefore never brought into a position to suffer the change under discussion, has no corresponding form *tezzm*.

A discussion of the phonetic cause of this change includes three distinct topics: (*a*) the change of *p* to *t* after *t*; (*b*) the change of *p* to *t* after *d*; (*c*) the change of *p* to *t* after *s* in the phrases *þess te bett*, &c. The latter seems to be a case of simple dissimilation to avoid the difficulty of uttering a sound like *p* twice in close succession in words so closely joined in pronunciation; the change is due, therefore, not to the preceding *s* but to the initial *p* of *þess*. A like dissimilation is seen in Greek, where *λόθη-τι* stands for *λόθη-θι*, and a still better illustration is found in German, where for the older *des diu* we find in the Nibelungen Lied *deste* (Mod. Germ. *desto*), which has undergone the same phonetic dissimilation as *þess te*, to which it etymologically corresponds.

The change of *p* to *t* after *t*, on the contrary, is a case of assimilation, and would be a very simple matter in word-formation, but such tendencies do not usually find play when words have no closer connection than that of juxtaposition. This assimilation of initial *p* to a preceding *t* is not peculiar to the Ormmulum, however; I have noticed it in *Piers Plowman*,<sup>1</sup> in Chaucer, and elsewhere, but it is generally confined to particular words which coalesce with the preceding word in pronunciation and often in writing. It seems, in fact, to be the result of a sort of *enclisis*, which attaches the following word to the preceding one, thus depriving it of its separate accent and rendering it more liable to change of form. The words most subject to this sort of inclination are the article *the* and the personal pronoun *thou*. In the Nibelungen Lied there are numer-

<sup>1</sup> fough ten atte ale.

Piers Plow. Prol. 42.

And seide "Sone slepestow, sestow þis poeple,"

Ibid. Pass. I, 5.

woldestow glase þat gable,

Ibid. Pass. III, 49.

And wel we weren esud atte beste.

Ch. Prol. Cant. Tales, 29.

And wend have hit this Aleyn atte ful.

Ibid. Reeve's Tale, 385.

ous cases of it,<sup>1</sup> and in the Low German Reinaert<sup>2</sup> it is carried so far as to become a special peculiarity of the language. In all these cases the second word, being enclitically attached to the foregoing and losing its separate accent, is rendered more liable to change; not only to the simple change of assimilation, but often to loss of some of its elements, as in the instances given in the notes. The personal pronoun *thou* is especially subject, in Old English, to this tendency to inclination, when it stands immediately after the verb. *Schaltu, artu, dostu, nostu, wepestu*<sup>3</sup> and the like, are met with often. The article *the* is often thus attached to the preposition *at*, but other cases seem rare. I have met with none except in the Ormulum and in one or two other works which bear a close resemblance to it in peculiarities of dialect, and are believed to have been produced in the same neighborhood.<sup>4</sup>

The works that bear the greatest likeness to the Ormulum are the poem of Genesis and Exodus and the Bestiary. Both these have been edited by Rev. Richard Morris for the Early English Text Society, and a careful catalogue of the peculiarities of dialect common to them with the Ormulum forms a part of his preface to the former work. In this list one point of resemblance mentioned is "the change of an initial *ð* (th) into *t* after words ending in *d, t, n, s*, that is to say, after a dental or a sibilant." Mr. Morris cites five cases of this change in Genesis and Exodus; one after *s*, one after *t*, and three after *d*; and adds, "This practice is more frequent in the Bestiary." In the preface to his edition of the Bestiary, he refers the reader to his edition of Genesis and Exodus for a discussion of the former's dialectic peculiarities.

To the five cases cited by Mr. Morris from Genesis and Exodus may be added *redes tu* (2934), and *saltu* (2941), but these seven

<sup>1</sup>E. g. *imme* (=in deme), 361, 3; *müesen lip* (=müese den lip), 455, 4, &c. The Modern Germ. *am* (=an dem), *zum* (=zu dem), and the like, are instances of the same tendency.

<sup>2</sup>E. g. *ter* (=te der), 150; *ten* (=te den), 322; *int* (=in dat), 3612; *dattu* (=dat du), 2879; *bistu* (=bist du), 4049, &c.

<sup>3</sup>I. e. *shalt thou, art thou, dost thou, knowest thou, wepest thou*. This position of the pronoun is common in statements as well as in questions.

<sup>4</sup>In An Old English Miscellany, edited by Mr. Morris for the Early English Text Society, I find (not counting the "Bestiary," which I have considered by itself) thirty-four cases of *thou* attached to its verb in the manner mentioned, but only three of *the*, and in all these the other MS. gives the unchanged form. They are all after *at*, viz. *atte* and *at þe*, Doomsday, 31; *atten* and *at þen*, A lutel soth sermun, 47; *aten* and *at þon*, *ibid.* 91. There are also two cases of *tu* (=thou) after *þat*, and one of *ti* (=thy) after *mit*.



cases are all I have noticed, though initial *p* occurs in the poem nearly seven hundred times after the letters<sup>1</sup> mentioned. One case of change in a hundred certainly bears little likeness to the systematic and regular change in the Orrmulum. However close its resemblance to the latter may be in other respects, it may be left out of account in discussing the change under consideration. The instances it furnishes are not more numerous than in other works which do not belong to the same dialect and did not originate in the same neighborhood.

In the Bestiary, as Mr. Morris remarks, the change is far more frequent, being made in a majority<sup>2</sup> of the cases, but differs from the usage of the Orrmulum in two important points. One is the change of *p* to *t* after *s*, which takes place in the Orrmulum only after *þess* in the phrases mentioned, while in the Bestiary, where these phrases are not found, the change to *t* takes place after the verb *is* and the possessive case of nouns. It is evident that the cause of the change here, be it what it may, is entirely different from that which has produced *þess te* in the phrases given. This change can hardly be counted among the points in which the Bestiary resembles the Orrmulum.

Again, in the Bestiary the writer seems to have changed the initial *p*, or left it unchanged, at random, while in the Orrmulum it is apparent, I think, that the author had a definite rule in mind which he systematically followed. This difference seems to me fundamental, and the two works can be brought into harmony of usage on this point only by assuming that the Bestiary has suffered in transcription by a later scribe. But in the absence of all evidence on the subject, we have no right to make such an assumption.

<sup>1</sup> It would seem that the insertion of *n* in Mr. Morris' list of letters after which *p* is subject to the change to *t* is a mere oversight. I have found no instance of such a change after *n* in the Orrmulum, nor in the other books compared with it, though I noted between thirty and forty cases of initial *p* after *n* in the Bestiary, and nearly three hundred in Genesis and Exodus, nearly all of which are in pronominal words.

<sup>2</sup> In the Bestiary initial *p* becomes *t* after *t*, 15 times; remains unchanged, 5 times; becomes *t* after *d*, 15 times; remains unchanged, 5 times; becomes *t* after *s*, 12 times; remains unchanged, 7 times. I have carefully classified both the preceding and following words in all these cases, but have failed to detect any rule of change. The words most often changed are *þe* and *þu*, and the words after which the change takes place oftenest are *þat*, *and*, and *is*, but this seems to be a merely natural result of the greater frequency of these words.

If we consider the change of *þ* to *t* after *t* as a case of assimilation, as seems natural, we are, nevertheless, at once involved in difficulty when we take up the question of the same change after *d*. The law of assimilation, unaffected by any other influence, should surely change *þ* into *d* in this case. The change of English *th* into *d* is the invariable result of the efforts of children and foreigners to articulate it, and if, as is generally assumed, words beginning with *th* had the same initial sound five or six centuries ago as they now have, it seems strange that the result of bringing *d* and *þ* together should be a combination so difficult to articulate as *dþ*, when a simple and natural assimilation<sup>1</sup> would produce a much easier combination. In studying the matter, the only solution that occurred to me was the supposition that final *d* may have had the sound of *t* at that time, as it now has in German and in many past participles in English. This hypothesis, apart from the lack of evidence, is at once met, however, by the fact of Orrmin's systematic carefulness in spelling, a point in which he stands alone among the old writers of English. I have no explanation to offer towards the solution of this difficulty.

In one respect all the works cited agree with the Ormmulum. This change of *þ* to *t* occurs only in pronominal words; in other words I have found no instance of it anywhere. And this brings up the further question why the change should be limited to this class of words. If the Ormmulum were not in existence, and only the cases of change in the other works cited in this article were to be accounted for, I should be inclined to refer the whole matter to the influence of loss of accent by inclination,<sup>2</sup> as mentioned above. The pronominal words thus used are still pronounced without marked accent, while non-pronominal words are not so treated. Losing their accent and being thus rendered more liable to change, they weaken or assimilate the initial *þ* under the influence of a preceding *t*, *d* or *s*, though independent words retain their individuality of pronunciation. The weakening or changing of sounds as

<sup>1</sup> In the Bestiary the final *þ* of verb-endings is often united with a preceding *d* to *t*; e. g. *fiut* (= *findeð*), 292; *bit* (= *biddeð*), 432; *hitt* (= *hideð*), 471, &c. Orrmin uses the full form in such verbs. In this article, however, I am not considering the treatment of medial or final *þ*.

<sup>2</sup> All the words that I have met with subject to this change (except in the Ormmulum) are monosyllabic and unemphatic, except that *tanne* occurs once in the Bestiary. Perhaps even this should be *tan*. The form *þan* is quite as common in the work as *þanne*.

a result of the shifting of accent is too common a phenomenon to require any discussion. The frequent habit of attaching these words to the preceding ones, as in *atte, sestow*, &c., shows that the writers combined them in pronunciation with the foregoing word rather than with the following one, and the modification of *tp* and *sp* into *tt* and *st* is the natural result of this partial union of two words into one. The change of *dp* into *dt*, where we should expect *dd*, involves a difficulty mentioned before, which would be explained, perhaps, if we could be sure of the sound given to *dt* in such cases.

This theory of inclination is not weakened by the fact that the change takes place more frequently in some works than others, and that it seems to be a matter of fancy with the writers whether the proper form or the weakened form be employed, for such inconsistencies are the result, in all languages, of the compromise between the written and the spoken form of a word, and illustrations could be cited by the hundred from modern English. But the theory fails at once when applied to the Ormmulum. Such words as *teþennforrrp* and *tohhwheþpre* cannot be explained by inclination, nor can the numerous cases of change where the article *pe* combines with the following word by *proclisis*.<sup>1</sup> The difference of treatment in the case of pronominal words and others in the Ormmulum must rest on some other difference than that of accent, and this can be nothing else, I think, than a difference of sound. And when we remember that initial *th* has one sound now in all words of pronominal derivation and another sound in all other words, it is not hard to believe that the difference also existed in Orrmin's time, and was the basis of his different treatment of the two classes of words.

I am not qualified to express an opinion on the oft-debated question of the sound of *p* in the Saxon and Early English period. Mr. Sweet, after a study of the use of the two characters *p* and *ð*, as they stand in the MSS., maintains<sup>2</sup> that there was originally but one sound, that of *th* in *this*, and that frequency of use has caused the retention of this sound in the pronominal words, though

<sup>1</sup> E. g. *talde* (= *te alde*); *tallre* (= *te allre*), &c.

<sup>2</sup> In an appendix to his edition of Alfred's Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care, published by the Early Eng. Text Soc.

I have used the character *p* all through this article, although some of the works quoted use *ð*, others *p*; because clearness seemed to me of more value than exactness of form in quotation.

it has been changed in other words. Whether this opinion is true, and whether the cause assigned for the retention of the older sound in the words mentioned is a sufficient one, are questions with which I am not concerned in this article. Nor is it necessary to consider here what sound *medial* or *final* *p* may have had. Orrmin's usage seems to me to prove that about A. D. 1200, in the Midland district of England, two sounds of initial *p* were in existence, and that one of them was used, as is still the case, in all words of pronominal derivation; the other, in all other words. Whether these sounds were the same then as now is another question. Assuming, as we naturally do, that they were so, we come back to the same question in another form; why one sound of initial *p* should be more subject to change than the other.<sup>1</sup>

The answer to this question may be found, I think, in what may be called the *formalism* of Orrmin's style. No one can read the Orrmulum without being struck with the great difference between the regularity of his grammar, metre and spelling, and the looseness of form in all other works of the period. I have already mentioned<sup>2</sup> his retention of the full ending in the verb where the writer of the Bestiary admits the less formal shortened form, and the whole of his grammar is equally regular. His exactness in spelling is well known, as is also the mechanical device he adopted of doubling a consonant to show the sound of the preceding vowel, and the earnestness with which he begs any one who may copy his work to write it after his model.<sup>3</sup>

“& whase wilenn shall þis boc  
 Effþ operr siþe writenn,  
 Himm bidde icc þatt hēt write riht  
 Swa summ þiss boc himm tæcheþþ,  
 All þwerft üt affterr þatt itt iss  
 Uppo þiss firste bisne,

<sup>1</sup> This question is discussed here with reference of course to the Orrmulum only, the cause of the change in all other works being, if my explanation be the true one, not the nature of the sound of initial *p*, but *inclination*, and its restriction to pronominal words a result of the fact that only those words are enclitically used.

<sup>2</sup> See note 1, p. 54. His retention of the full participial ending *-edd* and his use of *þær* as relative and *þære* as demonstrative, though both are forms of the same word, are other illustrations.

<sup>3</sup> Orrmin seems to have met with the experience of most reformers in having no imitators. There is no proof that any one ever copied his book with his spelling or any other.

Wip̃ all swille rime alls her iss sett,  
 Wip̃ all se fele wordess  
 & tatt he loke wel p̃att he  
 An bocstaff write twiꝝꝝess  
 Eꝝꝝwhaer p̃aer it uppo p̃iss boc  
 Iss writenn o p̃att wise.  
 Loke he well p̃att hēt write swa,  
 Forr he ne maꝝꝝ nohht elless  
 Onn Ennglissh writtenn rihht te word,  
 p̃att wite he wel to sope."

*Dedication, 95-110.*

I have written out this passage in full because, while showing his carefulness in spelling and the emphasis he lays on the necessity of writing "a letter twice" wherever he has done so, it also illustrates the formal regularity of his metre. Each verse has a fixed number of syllables, and a final vowel is as regularly elided before a vowel or *h* as in Latin poetry. In the whole poem I have found but one verse that drew my attention by being lame in metre. His formalism extends also to the arrangement and handling of his subject matter, and is, in fact, the essential part of his style.

To the same cause I am inclined to refer his formal regularity in the treatment of initial *p*. The assimilation of *p* to a preceding *t*, and its weakened pronunciation after *d* and *s*, can be explained in all other works as the result of a kind of inclination, treated of and illustrated above. Orrmin, finding most pronominal words subject to this change, treated it as a matter of euphony or spelling, and extended the usage to all words beginning with the same sound of *p*, allowing no exceptions, but carrying his system of regularity into this as into everything else.<sup>1</sup>

I cannot deny that this theory is open to the charge of being labored and artificial. But Orrmin is not by any means the only person who has attempted to make rules of grammar, and the assumption that he did so in this case is supported by his artificial regularity in other things. I am quite ready to accept any other theory of this change that will better account for the facts of his usage. Until a better one is brought forward, the conclusions I have reached, after studying the matter, are these:

<sup>1</sup> The fact that Orrmin does not change *p* to *t* after *s* (except in *pess te*) is no objection to the explanation offered. The change after *s* was unusual; I have found it only in the Bestiary and two or three times in Genesis and Exodus. Regularity was therefore secured in this case by making no change at all in *p* when it followed *s*.

1. That in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the two sounds of initial *th* were already in existence as they now are, and in the same words.

2. That monosyllabic words of pronominal derivation were subject to a weakening and assimilation of the initial *th* sound to *t* after *d* and *t*, less often after *s*; the result of a kind of inclination and consequent loss of accent.

3. That the extension of this change to all pronominal words in the *Ormmulum* is artificial and the result of the author's desire for regularity; a desire shown also in his grammar, spelling and metre.

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